

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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Radical Shia Terrorism in Western Europe

Terrorist activity by Iranian agents or Iranian-backed radical Shia groups in Western Europe has escalated since the beginning of 1984. Pro-Iranian terrorists have been involved in at least nine attacks in Western Europe over the past year and a half, and in several cases, attacks never moved beyond the planning stage or were stymied by European security services. The evidence indicates that operational planning by terrorists has been increasing and that the radical Shias have developed an independent operating capability in Europe. We judge that radical Shia activity in Western Europe will continue to present a serious threat to US interests there. [redacted]

Since early 1984, Iranian-backed terrorists have conducted attacks in several West European countries:

- o On 7 February 1984, General Oveisi, the Shah's former martial law administrator, and his brother were shot dead in Paris, France. An anonymous caller claimed responsibility for the attack in the name of "Islamic Jihad"--a cover name used by several pro-Iranian terrorist elements. Iranian intelligence agents probably conducted this attack.
- o On 12 May 1984, a car laden with explosives detonated near an Iraqi Airways ticket office in Nicosia, Cyprus. Iraqi dissident groups supported by Iran claimed credit.
- o On 31 July 1984, three radical Lebanese Shias hijacked an Air France plane flying from Frankfurt to Paris and diverted it to Tehran. Iranian officials reportedly furnished the hijackers with weapons in Tehran.

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Terrorism Analysis Branch, Terrorism/Narcotics Analysis Division, Office of Global Issues.

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- o On 6 August 1984, a lone gunman attacked a Kuwaiti businessman in a Spanish resort town, killing the businessman's driver. In September, a Saudi engineer was assassinated in the same town. "Islamic Jihad" callers claimed credit for both attacks.
- o On 3 December 1984, bombs were found under the cars of four Iraqi diplomats in Athens, Greece. A Greek bomb disposal expert was killed trying to defuse one of the bombs. An Iranian-backed Iraqi opposition group claimed credit.

Aborted operations included:

- o A planned hijacking of a Saudi airliner in Madrid that was uncovered by Spanish police in July 1984. Four Iranians were arrested.
- o A plot by seven radical Lebanese Shias in Italy to attack the US Embassy in Rome. Italian police arrested the seven last November. [REDACTED]

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We do not have the information needed to assess in depth the support structure in Europe that facilitates radical Shia terrorist operations there. The evidence suggests that Iranian agents or Shia operatives travel to Europe from the Middle East in order to conduct specific attacks. In addition, however, many European countries contain sizable communities of immigrant Shias who can be used to support or conduct terrorist attacks. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] indicates that Iranian diplomatic personnel and facilities in Europe also are involved in coordinating and providing logistical support for terrorist operations. At least one official at the Iranian Embassy in Madrid was involved in the plan to hijack the Saudi airliner last summer and the seven Shias arrested in Italy last November were to use explosives stored at the Iranian Embassy in Rome. The Ministry of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard is heavily involved with terrorist groups, and Guard members are assigned to most Iranian embassies. [REDACTED]

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Iran also supports several cultural institutions and pro-Khomeini student associations in Western Europe, particularly in Italy, West Germany, Spain, and France. These institutions spread pro-Iranian propaganda among the Shias living or studying in Europe and may also be involved in recruiting or otherwise supporting terrorist operations. [REDACTED]

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The available evidence indicates, however, that Iran was not involved in planning or conducting the TWA hijacking that was staged in Greece last month. That operation demonstrated that the radical Shias have developed an independent capability to conduct terrorist attacks in Europe, making them an even greater threat to US interests there. [REDACTED]

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